The largest banyan tree in the world is located in India
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Apart from being India's national tree, the banyan's natural form is magical and the origin of numerous myths, legends and ghost stories. The Indian banyan tree is a variety of fig (Ficus benghalensis) which grows from the seeds that land on other trees or even buildings and other man-made structures. Pollinated by fig wasps, these trees take over their host plants completely, killing them in the process. This is the reason they are also known as strangler figs. In nature, life and death coexist and the animals and birds find shelter in the hollows left behind by the decomposing host plant.

Omnipresent across the country, this tree is part of both urban landscapes and forests. In general, banyans are counted among the world's largest trees as their aerial prop roots spread out laterally growing in both thickness and area covered. However, there is one tree near Kolkata, West Bengal, that breaks all records. It is a garden and ecosystem unto itself which supports a host of fauna.

West Bengal's Great Banyan is the world's largest tree

The Great Banyan is located in the The Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Botanical garden in Howrah, near Kolkata. The entire garden is actually one tree that spans 3.5 acres and is over 80 feet tall, making it one the natural marvels of the world.

The branches of this tree spread out to form a canopy over the entire area and the 3,600 roots of the tree form the expansive forest-like experience. This tree has withstood two great cyclones in 1864 and 1867 and continues to draw thousands of visitors to witness its grandeur. Today, it survives without its main trunk, which used to be 51 feet wide and gradually decayed, as a result of which it was removed in 1925.

A long road of 330 metres was constructed around the tree so that tourists could drive around the entire circumference of the structure, however, the Great Banyan continues to expand beyond this. Since the tree continues to grow in width, it has been nicknamed the "walking tree".

In 1989, it was included in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as a tree that has the largest canopy and covers the widest span of area. Till date, it continues to hold on to this title and survive the churn of human history.

Source: https://www.cntraveller.in/story/kolkata-west-bengal-largest-banyan-tree-in-the-world/